



WESTERN NEWS

Libby MT 59923

Wednesday & Friday

APR 23 2004

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To the Editor

LJD

Local asbestos clinic should receive funding from legislation

To the Editor:

Enclosed, a letter to Senator Hatch and his bill on asbestosis and the amount of \$108 billion over a 20-year plus time frame. It is supposed to extinguish lawsuits against Grace & Co. and other parties. It is obvious that legislation will be of far more value to Libby and other victims of asbestos than a lawsuit or bankruptcy of Grace & Co.

I had hoped to suggest to the Senator that there is already in place in all 50 states workmen's comp. These laws could be amended to handle asbestosis relief and it could be fast tracked to the victims because the claims would not have to be adjudicated through the courts. It would only take a year for a couple of c-scans and two or three breathing tests to show that a person has it and is unemployable. It usually takes two or three years of litigation to qualify for normal workers comp.

Believe me, asbestosis cannot be faked, either you have it or you don't. If left to the bureaucrats, they will form a whole new agency to disperse relief of asbestosis thus using up much of any legislative relief that might be

due the victims.

CAG and a visit from EPA chief, could this be because of Senator Hatch and his legislation? I believe Leavitt to be a good man, however EPA has been around for a long time and could have, along with OSHA, shut down the Grace mine 10 years earlier and saved many lives and disease. This agency has superfund legislation and a public obligation that they have not kept going back to Love Canal.

It is interesting that a Michigan health center is now focusing on asbestos. It follows in my thinking that they are 25 to 30 years behind in their focus. If their concern had been in the interest of the people of Michigan, they would have been involved in the early 1980's and the mine in Libby would have been shut down. Their sudden concern seems to be in asbestosis legislation and their ability to now get their snouts in the trough. It is stated in The Western News of the 14th. It is also stated that Michigan Health Center should be an ally to the Libby Card program. This statement should be reversed; in fact the efforts of Dr. Brad Black and Dr. Whitehouse

over the past 10 to 15 years make them far more credible than any pseudo-intellectual university.

It is, I am sure, noted to every victim of asbestosis here in Libby that CDC has started a registry of people diseased with asbestosis. Again, CDC has had from Libby samples of mineralized tumors, x-rays and c-scans going back to the late 1970's early 1980's; they also could have contributed to the shut down of Grace mining. They now register victims in hopes to tap into any legislation. Indeed I believe it is mandated in their charter and is in the title Center for Disease Control. This agency never exercised its mandate over Grace & Co. and open pit mining of Zonolite asbestos here in Libby, MT. This at the expense of many lives and much disease not only in Libby but also nationally.

Again as stated CDC, EPA, OSHA and the late-coming university were all morally mandated to stop this mine at least 10 years before it happened.

There is one exception to funding out of the senator's legislation. It is obvious that Libby, MT, and Dr. Black's clinic are at the epicenter of the disease because of

the number of victims. It is of concern that should there be legislation that Grace & Co. will withdraw its support of their CARD program here. They are, at this time not accepting all patients that Dr. Black has identified as having asbestosis so his clinic here is necessary because of his history and dedication, also with the volume of disease here he will need funding.

I would also suggest that you make the funding direct to him and his clinic. I am sure the Senator understands that if it is done through another agency that these bureaucrats are experts at field stripping legislation for administrative costs leaving little left for its intended purpose. It is hoped you will review my suggestions in the positive way I have made them.

In closing, I wish you luck in your efforts. It is important for our country. I am 70 and have a short time left because of asbestosis, but I do care about others. So thank you for trying. I will try to get my letters published in a national publication, and inform the public.

Edward Perley